

Sample Paper Outline — adapted from my friend, Dr. Owen Cantrell

- I. Introductory Section
 - a. Demonstrate relevance of topic: who cares?
 - b. Detailed, focused, interesting. Avoid, “since the dawn of time...”
 - c. Claim

- II. Section 1
 - a. Explain the conversation about your topic (who is talking about it? What is the conversation? What are the disagreements/debates?)
 - b. How does your claim intercede in the debate you are describing?

- III. Section 2
 - a. Supporting point that relates back to your claim (Primary argumentative point of this section)
 - b. Illustrations, Examples, Evidence to support primary point
 - c. Explanation (how does your evidence prove your point?)

- IV. Section 3
 - a. Supporting point that relates back to your claim (Primary argumentative point of this section)
 - b. Illustrations, Examples, Evidence to support primary point
 - c. Explanation (how does your evidence prove your point?)

- V. Section 4 (there can be more than four sections...)
 - a. Supporting point that relates back to your thesis (Primary argumentative point of this section)
 - b. Illustrations, Examples, Evidence to support primary point
 - c. Explanation (how does your evidence prove your point?)

- VI. Concluding Section
 - a. Demonstrate how you have proved your claim
 - b. Conclude by demonstrating the “so what” of your paper or your topic

Some questions to consider:

- When would it be appropriate to include a naysayer in your text? What points would be strengthened by discussing counterarguments?
- What are some different ways you are using your sources? Are they supporting your points? Are you disagreeing with them?
- When interacting with a source, are you using the best method appropriate for the point you want to make (quote, summary, and paraphrase)?
- Do your primary points all strongly relate back to your claim? Do they logically follow and transition well into and from one another?